Challenges, Stressors and Well-Being of Work from Home Professionals with special reference to the IT Sector

Synopsis

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LIST OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1	**Introduction**	**1**
	1.1 Definitions	**1**
	1.2 Characteristics of WFH Scenario	**2**
	1.3 Occupations conforming to WFH	**2**
	1.4 Trends in WFH	**2**
	1.5 Factors affecting the move towards WFH	**3**
	1.6 Firm approach towards WFH	**4**
	1.7 Advantages and Disadvantages of WFH	**5**
	1.8 Individual level outcome of WFH	**5**
SECTION 2	**Theoretical Background**	**7**
	2.1 Theories of Well-Being	**7**
	2.2 Theories of Stress	**8**
SECTION 3	**Review of Literature and Identification of Research Gap**	**8**
	3.1 Review of Literature	**8**
	3.2 Research Gap	**19**
SECTION 4	**Conceptual Framework**	**20**
SECTION 5	**Overview of Proposed Research Study**	**21**
	5.1 Need of the Study	**21**
	5.2 Objectives of the Study	**23**
	5.3 Hypothesis of the Study	**23**
	5.4 Research Methodology	**24**
	5.4.1 Scope of the Study	**24**
	5.4.2 Data Collection	**25**
	5.4.3 Research Design	**25**
	5.4.4 Population of the Study	**25**
	5.4.5 Sector	**25**
	5.4.6 Sampling Technique	**25**
	5.4.7 Sample Size and Selection Criteria	**25**
	5.4.8 Tools of Data Analysis	**26**
	5.4.9 Phases of Proposed Study	**27**
SECTION 6	**Proposed Chapterization**	**29**

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The Work from Home (WFH) Scenario and Alternative Work Places (AWP) are not completely new concepts. The traces of their existence have been visualized, and is also quite evident in some sectors in India and more dominantly in other foreign countries especially in IT sector and other IT enabled and allied services in the 21st century (Ouye, Nagy, Singer, & Langhoff, 2010). The WFH and AWP have modified the way of working of the employees. They have been searching for, and also innovate interesting and efficient methods, techniques and ways of working for the employees (Ouye et al. 2010). Though their existence is not a new one, but the sudden attack of the on-going Covid-19 Pandemic has accelerated the utility and significance of WFH and expanded it's scope making it a need of the hour to ensure the safety concern of the employees world-wide which is of primary concern. Globally, 'one among the six employees' expected working from home as a new normal which constitutes a remarkable proportion of the global work force in the near future having immense potential (Berg, Bonnet, & Soares, 2020).

Definitions

Home Work: According to C-177, Home Work Convention, 1996, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has defined Home Work as 'The work or any task or assignment, obligation or duty, performed by an employee in his or her home, or in any premises as per his or her choice, other than the actual workplace of the employer where they usually work for compensation, as a result of the production of a product or service offered, specified in the job description, irrespective of who provides him or her with the equipments, materials or other inputs used, unless that person has the degree of freedom, autonomy and economic independence which is necessarily required for an employee to be considered an independent worker under the national laws, regulations and in taking the legal and judicial decisions or proceedings'.

Work from Home (WFH): The ILO, has defined WFH as 'a work setting or arrangement in which an employee performs the essential obligations and responsibilities of his or her job from home with the support of Information and Communications Technology (ICT)'.

While the term WFH, is used interchangeably with telecommuting, the latter implies 'substituting telecommunications for commuting, which saves the travel time'. WFH on the other hand, is 'home-

based telework', where teleworking is 'broader than telecommuting, and may or may not be a substitute for commuting'.

1.2 Characteristics of work from home scenario

There are some fundamental differences in characteristics and nature related to WFH and working from an office or a firm onsite. First, in WFH scenario, no commuting is required to the office, back and forth every day, which saves a lot of time that can be utilized elsewhere which is of significant value. Second, WFH provides flexible work scheduling as per the convenience of an employee, with the mutual consent of the supervisors. Flexible working may or may not be permissible in the traditional office scenario. Third, if the employee is in a care giving role, he/she may be able to fulfil the personal responsibilities and obligations towards his or her family and friends, which would not be possible while working onsite. Fourth, time management becomes challenging because of frequent interruptions at home, then in the office environment, which may be more oriented towards crises

management. Fifth, for WFH to be successful, a person needs to be self-motivated and committed towards the work. Sixth, in WFH employees face boredom and sense of lonelineness more than people working onsite. An office environment permits people to socialize which affects their well-being. (blog.vantagecircle.com, 2020).

1.3 Occupations conforming to WFH

The Indagine Campionariadelle Professioni - the Italian Labour Force Survey (ICP-ILFS) in 2016 traced the top 10 occupations which could be performed from home. These included legal science specialists, logistic administration professionals, experts in linguistic, literary and documentary, secretarial and general affairs personnel, entrepreneurs, Directors, experts in mathematics, computer scientists, technicians, economic, accounting and financial management staff as well as commercial banking staff. Those professions which functioned from an external environment, or used machinery or were public facing, were not termed as having an affinity for work from home (Armanda, Guarascio, & Virgillito, 2020).

1.4 Trends in WFH

In the past few months of the 21st century, even before the present pandemic also, the world has observed an increase in the scale of operations shifting to work from home basis. According to the ILO, prior to

the pandemic Covid-19, which has forced the governments across the world to mandate staying at home for its citizens, 7.9% of the global workforce (260 million workers approximately) were engaged in permanent work from home arrangements with their firms.

Though workforce was engaged in permanent work from home arrangements with their firms world-wide, even before the on-going pandemic also, but it has definitely accelerated the pace of it's adoption drastically. A Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) study of 25,000 American employees, observed that the number of employees working from home, increased from 15% (Covid-19 prior period), to 34% during the pandemic (Eisenberg, forbes.com, 2020). According to CEPR (Center for Economic and Policy Research), globally, there are regional variations in possibilities for work from home. North America and Europe Labour Force comfortable in work from home arrangement is approximately 30%. However, the percentage is relatively less for Africa (6%) and South Asia (8%).

In Indian scenario too, for some sectors and functions, work from home was conducive as an alternative work arrangement. The Information Technology sector had been migrating employees towards work from home arrangements in the recent past, that is, before the Covid-19 pandemic. It accelerated it's pace in the pandemic. However, it is expected that in the post pandemic period also, the scale of work which will be executed by work from home employees would increase, indicating that it is here to stay longer. According to Patricia Strach, Interim Executive Director at the Rockefeller Institute, USA, "this forced work-from-home experience is projecting the trend that work-from-home arrangements are a viable strategy for many businesses and that this is likely to be true even after the crisis is over." In India, TCS has already announced that 75% of its 4.5 lakh employees (450,000 employees) will permanently work from home by 2025. IBM has also communicated that 75,000 Indian based employees would be working from home permanently. According to Wipro Chairman, Mr. Rishad Premji, there has been a permanent change in the work model, and the firm would never go back to the older way of working and are looking to implement a 100% work from home model.

1.5 Factors affecting the move towards work from home

There are numerous factors that affects the move towards WFH. The Analysis of these factors/drivers of WFH trends follows a dual approach of identifying the long-term structural factors, and short-term factors which have enabled quick transition to WFH models.

From a long-term perspective, it is widely recognized that technology has played an important role in transforming the nature of WFH, from simplistic customer service representative and telemarketing roles, into full time career positions across all functions that could be executed in online mode (Lambert & Peek, 2020). According to an ILO policy brief, employees in the IT industry in California, USA started employing ICT first, as a prerequisite, to work remotely from home

Income would have also played a role in adoption. 'Access to a high-speed Internet connection is highly and directly correlated with income,' increasing the potential to migrate to WFH arrangements (Chiou and Tucker, 2020).

The capability to connect remotely via chats and conference calls have also aided the cause of WFH adoption. Access to line of business applications for access to work has also helped smoothen the transition by addressing the suspicion and anxiety related to timely completion of work commitments and meeting critical to quality parameters.

From a short-term perspective of enablers observed during COVID-19, deployment of productivity tools and apps, moving to the Cloud, managing device access and identity security issues has helped firms like Microsoft to transition smoothly to WFH during the pandemic.

While there are many examples of firms on a 100% WFH model like Gitlab (2011), a software development firm, with a customer base of 100,000 firms and 1,306 remote workers, located in 68 countries; the phenomenon of WFH has remained 'occasional', with a small number of workers doing so, on a permanent basis (ILO).

1.6 Firm's approach towards WFH

The levels of engagement undertaken by firms in the WFH scenario vary from permitting employees to work flexibly at their own 'discretion and expenses', to providing full technical support like 'equipment', 'dedicated phone lines, software support, fax-printer units, help lines' etc. at the nearest corporate facility (Apgar, 1998).

During the pandemic, though, according to the ILO, many employees were requested to WFH, but 'without adequate support, and attention to setting up a safe workstation, and protecting their physical and psychological health and well-being'. This is a major cause of concern for the organization.

1.7 Advantages and Disadvantages of WFH

There are a number of advantages and disadvantages of WFH from the perspective of employees as well as the firm. Pratt (1984) enumerated upon the advantages for employees as flexibility, enhanced productivity and savings related to cost and time. For firms, the primary advantage lay in having access to a larger pool of labour, especially in cyclical businesses. Cost implications of release of real estate are additional benefits that firms are hoping to capitalize upon in the future. However, there are challenges that have been observed in the work from home scenario.

The most important challenges that workers feel is loneliness (Pinola, 2020, zapier.com). Professionals may be unable to manage their time well, among official and personal commitments (Pinola, 2020, zapier.com). They may also face the challenge of not being able to learn from home in the absence of adequate official trainers (Ringuet, 2020, zdnet.com). With different firms having a different resource base in terms of labour force, technology and finances, among others, it is expected that every employee would have a different experience of working from home for a firm.

1.8 Individual level outcome of WFH: Employee Well-Being and the relevance of stress and coping strategies

In the context of increasing number of personnel moving to work from home arrangements, it is important to understand the implications of stress and coping strategies on the well-being of the work from home employees.

Well-being is important since it is a desirable goal for every individual. According to the WHO, Well-Being refers to, "a positive rather than neutral state, framing health as a positive aspiration". According to the substance abuse and mental health services administration (SAMHSA) – (goodtherapy.org, 2016) Well-being is defined as incorporating eight dimensions:

Physical Well-Being: Referring to the sound health of an individual.

Emotional Well-Being: refers to the sound mental health of an individual, and how one feels about oneself and others.

Social Well-Being: It refers to the healthy relationships with others and society as a whole which provides a sense of belongingness.

Spiritual Well-Being: It gives meaning and purpose to one's life in alignment with one's values, principles and beliefs.

Environmental Well-Being: It refers to the understanding of how the social, natural and built environment affects the health, and, understanding the commitment and contribution of all towards a healthy planet.

Intellectual Well-Being: It refers to the growth and development of one's intellectual property, that is to expand the knowledge and skills & to utilize it optimally when opportunities are made available to an individual.

Occupational Well-Being: It refers to the wellness at the workplace and the sense of satisfaction and security from one's own job.

Financial Well-Being: It refers to the feeling of satisfaction about one's financial condition.

Stress is defined in the medical context as, "a physical, mental or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension" (medicinenet.com). It may deter an individual from attaining well-being.

Levels of Stress-

According to American Psychological Association (APA) there are 3 levels of Stress:

Acute Stress- It is the most common and frequent one. It is the first level of stress. It is most often caused by reactive thinking about situations or events that have recently occurred, or upcoming situations or events in the near future.

Episodic Acute Stress- It is the second level of Stress. People who frequently experience acute stress, or those who experience frequent triggers of stress have episodic acute stress.

Chronic Stress- It is the most harmful type of stress. It is the third level and the highest level. It is caused due to frequent and prolonged exposure to the triggers of stress. This long-term exposure to triggers of stress or stressful situations leads to this Chronic Stress as its name itself suggests.

If for a long time it is left untreated, it can significantly and often permanently damage your physical health and deteriorate your mental health. (spaciousthерapy.com, 2018).

Coping strategies, on the other hand, help an individual in dealing with stress. According to the Research network on SES and Health, coping strategies refer to the 'specific efforts, both behavioural

and psychological, that people employ to master, tolerate, reduce or minimize stressful events'. They are further subdivided into problem solving and emotion-focused.

The relationship between these aspects may be explained thus. The overall effect of stress may be mitigated, and higher levels of well-being may be attained. Workplace well-being initiatives have traditionally played an important role in helping alleviate stress amongst employees, and creating a wellness oriented work environment for them. The nature of the challenge that Human Resource Professionals face in the situation of increasing trend towards alternative workspaces, throws up important questions on not only a choice of initiatives, but also the effect of those initiatives on stress and well-being levels.

The proposed research hence aims to focus on the following research questions:

What challenges and stressors are experienced by work from home professionals in the Information Technology Sector?

Does gender and age affect the type of challenges and stressors experienced in a work from home scenario?

Is there an association between stress and well-being of work from home professionals in the information technology sector?

SECTION 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The present section delineates theories related to well-being and stress.

2.1 Theories of Well-being

This section is dedicated to enumerating upon the theories of well-being.

It is well known that well-being at work is multidimensional (Christianson, & Price, Grant, 2007; Page, & VellaBrodrick, 2009).

Hedonistic theories (Parfit, 1984): Concerned with experiences one has. 'The best life is one where a person has the most pleasurable experience'.

Desire fulfillment theories (Parfit, 1984): They propose that what is best for someone is the fulfillment of their desires.

Objective list theories (Parfit, 1984): A person achieves well-being if he realizes 'certain goods and values'

Subjective Well-Being theory (Diener, Lucas, & Oishi, 2002): The term subjective well-being describes a person's overall experience in life and reflects a person's self-described happiness. Subjective wellbeing includes positive attitudinal judgements as well as the experience of positive and negative effect.

Eudaimonic Well-Being (Fisher, 2014): A number of constructs in organizational behaviour display at least partial overlap with eudaimonic well-being. These include job involvement, work engagement, thriving, flow and intrinsic motivation, meaning in work. Job involvement consists of identifying closely with one's work and basing identity and self-esteem on one's work role.

Social Well-Being (Keyes, 1998): It consists of feeling embedded in meaningful communities and having satisfying short-term interactions and long-term relationships with others.

2.2 Theories of Stress

Systemic Stress: Selye's Theory (Selye, 1976)- According to it, the changes caused in general leads to the specific response pattern of systemic stress.

Psychological Stress: The Lazarus Theory (Lazarus, 1993)- It states that the stress is generated when an individual perceives that his demands exceed the resources (personal and social) available to him or which he is able to mobilise.

Resource Theories of Stress (Krohne, 2002): A Bridge between Systemic and Cognitive Viewpoints.

These theories are evident in proving the linkage and the relationship between the stress and well-being among the employees at work place.

SECTION 3: REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND IDENTIFICATION OF RESEARCH GAP

3.1 Review of Literature

The review of literature for this study is carried out to understand and develop the insight about the challenges and the factors responsible for causing stress and factors responsible for degradation of well-being of IT Professional Working from Home in IT Sector. It is also conducted to develop insight about the measures to curb it, so that their productivity can be enhanced and stability can be maintained in the economy as it the major growing sector of Indian Economy. The study emphasizes on the overall well-being of the IT Professionals WFH which can act as a remedy in mitigating their stress which will make them more efficient to deal with the challenges that they are facing.

The Literature Review comprises of 39 Research Studies (that includes research articles, papers, reports and editorials) in total. The Literature Review is divided into five crucial focus issues to develop a better insight into the topic.

Out of 39 Research Studies, one study is on the first focus issue, that is, Challenges of the Workforce. The study (Nielsen et al. 2016) talks about the new workplace as a protocol for a prospective panel study of work factors, sickness absence and exit from the working life by the employees.

Eleven studies talks about the second focus issue, that is, well-being of employees in the organization. This focus area talks about the well-being and concern of the Human Asset by the organizations. The emphasis is more on the subjective dimensions of health and well-being, that is, Psychological (or mental) health and well-being and its impact on the work life and personal life of an employee.

The study (Steinmetz & Schmidt, 2010) further talks about the relationship between health, well-being and stress of an employee. The study (Connor & Cavanagh, 2013) also talks about the measures for enhancement in the well-being like coaching etc. which can be taken at the organization level. The study (Haybron & Tiberius, 2015) further talks about the need for an improved well-being policy to uplift the standard of well-being among employees. The study (Wu, Cai, & Tu, 2019) focuses on the new, innovative and improved techniques to measure the subjective well-being in this focus area.

Furthermore, the study (Klussman, Curtin, Langer, & Nicholas, 2020) talks about the role and significance of self-awareness in affecting the well-being of an individual. The study (Lopez, 2020) also talks about the Psychological well-being in the present pandemic of Covid-19 and also compares the well-being status of young aged and old aged people. The last study (Morris et al. 2020) of this focus area talks about well-being taking women in focus and the measures to enhance the well-being of the women employees.

Six studies focus on the third focus issue, that is, Work from Home (WFH) Scenario. The first one (Montgomery, Panagopoulou, Peeters, & Schaufeli, 2005) talks about the meaning of work and home to make a clear distinction between the two. The second one (Dikkers et al. 2007) provides knowledge about the dimensions of the work-home culture. It includes the basic framework which encompasses all the dimensions of the work-home culture that make a work-home culture. It also talks about its relationship with the application of work-home arrangements and work-home interactions which is a

tactful task to manage efficiently. Furthermore, study (Troup & Rose, 2012) talks about the comparison of formal and informal telework arrangements made for work from home scenario, for better work-family outcomes. On the other hand, next study (Kim & Hollensbe, 2018) talks about the technological challenges and pressure and the significance of home support and conducive environment of home. The next one (Cetrulo, Guarascio, & Virgillito, 2020) talks about the benefits and privileges of working some home. The last study (Berg, Bonnet, & Soares, 2020) talks about working from home as a new future potential. It provides the estimates of working from home as the worldwide potential.

Eight studies talks about the fourth focus issue, that is, the new opportunities at the workplace. The first study (Demerouti & Geurts, 2004) provides knowledge about the typology, that is, the classification on the basis of various types of Work-Home Interaction. The next study (Vize et al. 2008) talks about the new ways and new measures adopted of working from home or from any other virtual setting or place of working apart from the actual workplace. It is related to various efficient techniques and strategies of working. Another study (Wasserman, 2011) in the hierarchy talks about the role of Internet in transforming the Software Industry. Furthermore, another one (Hinterseer, 2013) talks about the part-time work as non-representative, uncertain or normal scenario as a new opportunity. Furthermore, the next study (Kamel, Martins, Pessanha, & Andrade, 2017) gives insight about the creative and innovative measures taken for corporate happiness management for a healthy environment and well-being of the Human Asset. The Next study (Putnik et al. 2020) talks about the Work-Home Interface with reference to cross-culture dynamics. The last study (Peek, 2020) talks about the role and significance of Communication Technology in remote working. Remote work means working from outside premises instead of traditional working or office environment. The study talks about the inclusion or adoption of communication technology in building or shaping the future of remote work.

Fourteen studies talks about the fifth and the last focus issue, that is the stressors of the working professionals or employees. The first study (Fell, 2000) focuses on the significance of qualitative techniques to measure the work-based stressors. The second study (Aujla & Aujla, 2006) talks about the comparison of physiological and psychological stressors among working and non-working women. The third study (Trenberth & Dewe, 2006) focuses on experiencing the stressors and understanding it. The next study (Edwards, Guppy, & Cockerton, 2007) gives insight about the longitudinal study conducted

to explore the relationship between work and non-work stressors and its impact on the work performance. Another one (Pasupuleti, Allen, Lambert, & Tolar, 2009) tells about the impact that work stressors have on life satisfaction of the social service workers. The next study (Chang & Lu, 2009) talks about the influence of one's occupation on stressors felt by them and their work behaviours. Furthermore, another one (Steinmetz & Schmidt, 2010) talks about subjective health in focus and its relationship with working time variables and job stressors. The another one (Lo et al. 2010) adds and focuses on young women employees and their physical health working in night shifts. It shows that working in night shifts causes increased vascular stress and delayed recovery in young women. Another study (Lo, Thurasamy, & Liew, 2014) talks about the relationship between the bases of power and authority and job stresses and also highlights and role and significance of mentoring. Yet the next study (Yu, 2014) focuses on the Work-Life Balance emphasizing on Work Intensification and Job Insecurity as Job Stressors. Further adding to this focus area, the next study (Ninaus et al. 2015) provides insight about the stressors and benefits in context with the role and effects of ICT on employees' health and work stress. Furthermore, next study (Henderson & Abbas, 2019) focuses on comparing globally the work-related stressors experienced by psychiatrists. The another study (Gilstrap, Scball, & Gilstrap, 2019) talks about the stress generated or caused in international work. It also talks about the stressors and coping strategies adopted by RNGO's (Religiously-Affiliated Non-Governmental Organizations) international directors. The last study (Clauss, Hoppe, Schachler, & Shea, 2020) talks about the role of self-efficacy, that is self-belief and confidence among oneself and work-engagement as moderators in the stressor-detachment model.

The brief description of Literature Review is completed for a quick review.

Classification of Literature Review: A broad classification of the previous studies is done as follows:

Focus of the papers

Challenges of Workforce

Well-Being of Employees

WFH (Work from Home) Scenario

New Opportunities

Stressors

Context of the papers

Foreign

Type of Data for Analysis

Qualitative

Quantitative

Research Design

Exploratory

Descriptive

Conclusive

Analytical

From the Literature Review the fact that is highlighted that a comprehensive approach of overall well-being which will address the intrinsic as well as extrinsic factors (both individual personal factors and work life related factors) affecting the well-being of the employees.

Table No.1: Summary of Literature Review

Title ***Author(s) (Year)***	**Category**	**Focus Issues**							**Context**		**Data Type**		**Methodology**			
		Challenges of Workforce	**Well-Being of Employees**	**WFH Scenario**	**New Opportunities**	**Stressors**	**IT/Other Sectors (IT)**	**Other Sectors**	**Indian**	**Foreign**	**Qualitative**	**Quantitative**	**Exploratory**	**Descriptive**	**Conclusive**	**Analytical**
Use of Qualitative Techniques to measure work-based Stressors *Greg Fell (2000)*	Research Paper					✓				✓	✓					✓
Towards a typology of work-home interaction *Evangelia Demerouti & Sabine Geurts (2004)*	Research Paper				✓					✓	✓		✓			
The meaning of work and home *Anthony J. Montgomery, Efharis P. Panagopoulou, Maria C. W. Peeters & Wilmar B. Schaufeli (2005)*	Research Paper			✓						✓	✓		✓			
Physiological and Psychological Stressors among Working and Non-Working Women *Harshpinder Aujla & Paramjit Aujla (2006)*	Research Paper					✓				✓		✓				✓
Understanding the experience of stressors: The use of sequential analysis for exploring the patterns between various work stressors and strain *Linda Trenberth & Philip Dewe (2006)*	Research Paper					✓				✓		✓	✓			

Recovery opportunities, work-home interference, and well-being among managers *Dr. Toon W. Taris, Debby G. J. Beckers, Lotus C. Verhoeven, Sabine A. E. Geurts, Michiel A. J. Kompier & Dimitri Van Der Linden (2006)*	Research Paper		✓							✓		✓				✓
Dimensions of work–home culture and their relations with the use of work–home arrangements and work–home interaction *Josje S. E. Dikkers, Sabine A. E. Geurts, Laura Den Dulk, Bram Peper, Toon W. Taris & Michiel A. J. Kompier (2007)*	Research Paper			✓						✓	✓					✓
A longitudinal study exploring the relationships between occupational stressors, non-work stressors, and work performance *Julian A. Edwards, Andrew Guppy & Tracey Cockerton (2007)*	Research Paper					✓				✓		✓	✓			
New ways of working *Vize, C., Humphries, S., Brandling, J., et al (2008)*	The Columns Correspondence				✓					✓	✓			✓		
The Impact of Work Stressors on the Life Satisfaction of Social Service Workers: A Preliminary Study *Sudershan Pasupuleti, Reva I. Allen, Eric G. Lambert & Terry Cluse-Tolar (2009)*	Research Article					✓		✓		✓		✓				✓
The influence of occupation on stressors and work behaviours *Kirk Chang & Luo Lu (2009)*	Research Paper					✓				✓	✓					✓
Subjective health and its relationship with working time variables and job stressors: Sequence or General Factor Model? *Holger Steinmetz & Peter Schmidt (2010)*	Research Paper		✓			✓				✓		✓				✓

Working the Night Shift Causes Increased Vascular Stress and Delayed Recovery in Young Women *Shih-Hsiang Lo, Lian-Yu Lin, Jing-Shiang Hwang, Yu-Yin Chang, Chiau-Suong Liau & Jung-Der Wang (2010)*	Research Article					✓				✓		✓				✓
How the Internet transformed the software industry *Anthony I. Wasserman (2011)*	Research Paper				✓		✓			✓	✓					✓
Working from home: do formal or informal telework arrangements provide better work–family outcomes? *Carolyn Troup & Judy Rose (2012)*	Research Paper			✓						✓	✓					✓
The coaching ripple effect: The effects of developmental coaching on wellbeing across organisational networks *Sean O'Connor & Michael Cavanagh (2013)*	Research Article		✓							✓		✓				✓
Part-time work: Atypical? Precarious? Normal? *Tobias Hinterseer (2013)*	Research Article				✓					✓	✓					✓
Relationship between bases of power and job stresses: Role of mentoring *May-Chiun Lo, Ramayah Thurasamy & Wei Tak Liew (2014)*	Research Article					✓				✓		✓				✓
Work-life Balance-Work Intensification and Job Insecurity as job stressors *Serena Yu (2014)*	Research Paper					✓				✓		✓				✓
Benefits and Stressors-Perceived effects of ICT use on employee health and work stress: An exploratory study from Austria and Hong Kong *Katharina Ninaus, Sandra Diehl, Ralf Terlutter, Kara Chan & Anqi Huang (2015)*	Research Article					✓	✓			✓		✓	✓			

Well-Being Policy: What Standard of Well-Being? *Daniel M. Haybron & Valerie Tiberius (2015)*	Research Paper		✓							✓	✓					✓
Workplace Well-Being: The role of Job Crafting and Autonomy Support *Gavin R. Slemp, Margaret L. Kern & Dianne A. Vella-Brodrick (2015)*	Research Article		✓							✓		✓				✓
What do people do at work? *Michael J. Handel (2016)*	Research Article							✓		✓		✓		✓		
The new workplace II: Protocol for a prospective full-panel registry study of work factors, sickness absence, and exit from working life among Norwegian employees *Morten Birkeland Nielsen, Solveig Christiansen, Anne-Marthe Rustad Indregard, Jan Shahid Emberland, Shahrooz Elka & Stein Knardahl (2016)*	Research Article	✓								✓	✓			✓		
Creativity and innovation for corporate happiness management *Jose Augusto Nogueira Kamel, Caio Varela Martins, Mariana Batista Pessanha & Marcelo Weiler De Andrade (2017)*	Research Article				✓					✓		✓			✓	
When work comes home: technology-related pressure and home support *Sungdoo Kim & Elaine Hollensbe (2018)*	Research Article			✓						✓	✓					✓
Unhappy with well-being research in the temporary work context: mapping review and research agenda *Susanne Imhof & Maike Andresen (2018)*	Research Article		✓							✓	✓					✓

Maudsley International: improving mental health and well-being around the world *Nick Bouras, Silvia Davey, Tracey Power, Jonathan Rolfe, Tom Craig & Graham Thornicroft (2018)*	Special Paper		✓							✓	✓		✓			
A computerized adaptive testing advancing the measurement of subjective well-being *Yifang Wu, Yan Cai & Dongbo Tu (2019)*	Research Article		✓							✓		✓		✓		
International comparison of the work-related stressors experienced by psychiatrists *M. Henderson, M. Abbas (2019)*	Editorial					✓				✓	✓					✓
Stress in international work: Stressors and coping strategies of RNGO international directors *Christina M. Gilstrap, Sara Scball & Curt A. Gilstrap (2019)*	Research Paper					✓		✓		✓	✓					✓
Work-home interface in a cross-cultural context: a framework for future research and practice *Katarina Putnik, Inge Houkes, Nicole Jansen, Frans Nijhuis & IJmert Kant (2020)*	Research Paper				✓					✓	✓					✓
Examining the effect of mindfulness on well-being: self-connection as a mediator *Kristine Klussman, Nicola Curtin, Julia Langer & Austin Lee Nichols (2020)*	Research Report		✓							✓		✓				✓
Psychological Well-Being Among Older Adults During the Covid-19 Outbreak: A Comparative Study of the Young-Old and the Old-Old Adults. *Javier Lopez (2020)*	Manuscript		✓							✓	✓					✓

The privilege of working from home at the time of social distancing *Armanda Cetrulo, Dario Guarascio & Maria Enrica Virgillito (2020)*	Research Article			✓						✓	✓					✓
Women in focus: advice from the front lines on how to enable well-being and build resilience *Elizabeth Morris, Rahel A. Kubik-Huch, May Abdel-Wahab, Elizabeth Balogun, Charlotte Beardmore, Regina Beets-Tan, Aidan Boyd-Thorpe, Lorenzo Derchi, Michael Fuchsjager, Janet Husband, Valerie Jackson, Dina Husseiny Salama, Valerie Vilgrain & Hedwig Hricak (2020)*	Research Article		✓							✓	✓		✓			
Occupational self-efficacy and work engagement as moderators in the stressor-detachment model *Elisa Clauss, Annekatrin Hoppe, Vivian Schachler & Deirdre O'Shea (2020)*	Research Paper					✓				✓	✓					✓
Working from home: Estimating the worldwide potential *Janine Berg, Florence Bonnet, Sergei Soares (2020)*	Research Article			✓						✓	✓		✓			
Communication Technology and Inclusion Will Shape the Future of Remote Work *Sean Peek (2020)*	Research Article				✓		✓			✓	✓				✓	

3.2 Research Gap –

Though researches have been conducted investigating the challenges and stressors, and well-being of employees, their life satisfaction, work performance and productivity (Linda Trenberth & Philip Dewe, 2007; Julian A. Edwards, Andrew Guppy & Tracey Cockerton, 2007; Pasupuleti et al. 2009; Holger Steinmetz & Peter Schmidt, 2010; Lo et al. 2010), the researcher was unable to find a study dedicated to understand the association between stress and well-being of work from home employees with specific reference to the IT sector. It is this particular objective which the present study aims to fulfill generating a clear research gap.

The knowledge gap identified by the Literature Review in the area of overall well-being of IT Professionals, as the focus was particularly on the Psychological Well-Being (or Subjective Dimensions of Well-Being) only and not on all the 8 dimensions of well-being as discussed earlier in the study (Bouras et al. 2018; Javier Lopez, 2020; Morris et al. 2020) to counter their stress will be filled in this study by adopting holistic approach. This study will adopt the integrated and comprehensive approach to deal with this sensitive area of well-being of IT Professionals. It will ensure their overall well-being through collaborated measures and efforts to address the overall dimensions of well-being to mitigate overall stress addressing all the stressors comprehensively. It will also help to deal with the challenges emerging as a cause of this pandemic to enhance their performance and productivity.

Researches have been conducted on Work from Home Scenario, it's meaning and dimensions and on employees engaged in Working from home, their challenges and stressors, productivity (outcome) and well-being (Dikkers et al. 2007; Montgomery et al. 2010; Carolyn Troup & Judy Rose, 2012; Sungdoo Kim & Elaine Hollensbe, 2017), but the researcher was unable to find a study dedicated to IT Sector specifically and to IT Professionals working from home. It generates a clear research gap in this area.

Furthermore, all researches have been conducted in this field of study or area in foreign context. No studies are conducted in this domain in Indian context providing a clear research gap, as well as scope for the study.

SECTION 4: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

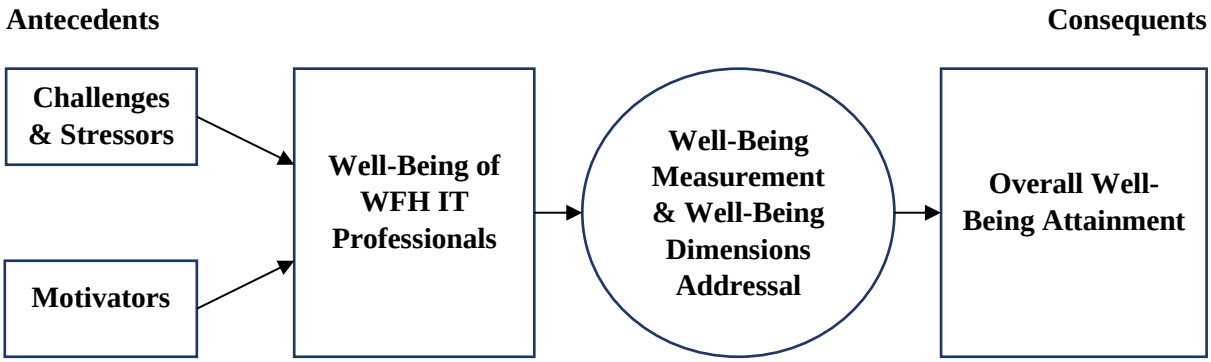

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework (Source: Researcher's own construct)

The conceptual framework developed here by seeking insights from the Theoretical Framework and Literature Review is an integrated approach which is a blend of both the intrinsic and extrinsic factors (Both individual personal factors and work life related factors) affecting the overall well-being of IT Professionals Working from Home. These are known as the antecedents (Inputs or Facilitators). There are the factors (Both Intrinsic and Extrinsic) that affects the well-being of IT Professionals negatively leading to stress. These factors are the challenges and stressors. On the other hand, there are factors (Both Intrinsic and Extrinsic) that affects the well-being of IT Professionals Positively that leads to an increase in their motivation level and morale. The framework highlights the impact of interventions in the form of well-being measurement and well-being dimension addressal. This will lead to attainment of overall well-being of these professionals, which is known as the consequents (Outcomes or Resultant Variables). It will lead to enhancement in their productivity.

The crucial variables identified for the consideration of the study are-

Employees' Challenges

Employees' Stressors

Employees' Well-Being

Graphical Representation of the Study

The study is to check overall stress of IT Professionals in India according to different stress levels & to counter it, overall well-being of these Professionals should be ensured through well-being dimensions as a counter strategy and all the dimensions should be addressed to ensure the overall well-being.

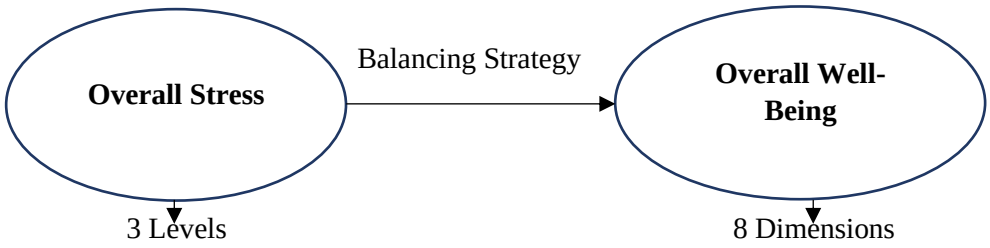

Figure 2: Basic concept of the study

SECTION 5: OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED RESEARCH STUDY

5.1 NEED OF THE STUDY:

The discontentment of the IT Professionals Working from Home due to the challenges and stressors emerging because of the pandemic, is quite eminent as shown by different articles and surveys already discussed above in the introduction section, and obvious in the present challenging and stressful scenario as previous researches of Literature Review supports the fact.

The situation needs efficient control as it is crucial to curb their discontentment and enhance their overall well-being, so that a balance can be maintained in the economy. Their overall well-being concern is off utmost importance for smooth functioning of IT Sector, as it is a major contributor in Indian economy. The IT & BPM Industry contributes approximately to 8% of India's GDP and employs around 41 Lakh Professionals which is a huge figure proving it's significance and worth for Indian Economy playing a dominant role. (statista.com,2020) (ibef.org, 2020) This data supports the need of the study for improvement in the productivity of IT Professionals Working from Home, as a whole thriving for excellence in the sector. It can only be possible if the overall Well-Being of IT Professionals in integration will be ensured, so that they can be in an improved situation than before leading to their upliftment & improved quality of work life, hence enhancing their productivity.

The previous researches are also quite eminent in this regard indicating about the increasing level of stress among them, so, their well-being is what is needed to be ensured. It is an alarm that it is the high time to focus on their well-being.

As being the major contributors in the economy, their well-being is of utmost importance in present stressful and crisis situation worldwide due to Covid-19. This pandemic situation recently prevailing worldwide which has forced the IT Professional to work from home which is a challenging scenario. They are dealing with multiple challenges and stressors.

And as Work from Home is going to stay here for longer worldwide as shown in an article already discussed, the significance of the study will not fade away in post pandemic scenario. The range of percentage of the working population who thinks work from home is a new normal is from 68-80% (public.tableau.com) which is quite high supporting work from home scenario and can demand to continue working from home even when this pandemic will fade away. The feasibility to implement the Work from Home Policy by the businesses depends on flexible workspace policy. The range of percentage of such businesses is from 32-80% showing ample opportunity to implement Work from Home Scenario and to continue it in post pandemic stage also (public.tableau.com).

The performance of IT Professionals WFH would enhance in this challenging period when their overall well-being will be addressed and their stress level will be reduced. As there are 8 crucial dimensions of well-being of an individual mentioned earlier in the study, they all need to be addressed for ensuring their full-fledged welfare and overall well-being. It will increase their satisfaction level and reduce their anxiety and stress level which will boost their morale hence, increasing their performance and productivity. Previous studies have addressed one dimension of well-being, that is psychological well-being which is not enough for their overall well-being, all dimensions should be addressed.

Review of their overall well-being concern to develop new insights and to adopt effective measures by the IT companies and their HR Professional, in this regard is the need of the hour to deal with this crisis period. In this harsh situation it is mandatory to uplift the performance of the IT industries which are the major contributors from the service sector in the Indian economy as already evident. Collaborative efforts are needed to be taken by the HR personnel of IT sector, brainstorming sessions should be done to develop new insights to attain overall well-being of their IT Professionals. They need to seek some fresh potentials and to take some dynamic initiatives to ensure their overall well-being to mitigate their rising discontentment. It will enable them to fight with the emerging problem of their high attrition.

This study will help in this endeavor by highlighting the role of the overall well-being of IT Professional Working from Home in reducing their stress level and enhancing their productivity. This study will also highlight the importance and worth of the overall well-being over the monetary benefits in isolation. An integration of these benefits with their well-being is needed to deal with the present scenario of crisis,

uncertainty and discontentment. It will also help to meet the changing expectations of these Professionals to keep them satisfied, motivated & committed.

This study will help and contribute in dealing with all the dimensions of well-being for ensuring overall well-being at work place to counter the overall stress by dealing with all the stressors & challenges (including all the intrinsic & extrinsic factors connected with personal life and work life as they both impact each other which is evident from Theoretical Framework, Literature Review & Conceptual Framework as well) by adopting a holistic and comprehensive approach. As a resultant the overall well-being will be improved, which will lead to high commitment and improved motivation leading to improved performance of employees' which will result in overall improved performance of the organization.

5.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY –

To identify the challenges faced & stressors experienced by Indian IT Professionals working from home.

To check the association between challenges faced in work from home scenario & perceived stress level of Indian IT Professionals working from home.

To check the association between stress and well-being of Indian IT Professionals working from home.

To check the difference in stress levels between Male and Female population of Indian IT Professionals working from home.

To check the difference in stress levels of young-aged, between the age group of 18-35 years, and old-aged, that is of 50 and above years of age, Indian IT Professionals working from home.

5.3 HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY-

Ho_1: There is no association between stress level and well-being of Indian IT Professionals working from home

H_1: There is an association between the stress level and well-being of Indian IT Professionals working from home

Ho_2: There is no significant difference between the stress levels of Male and Female population of Indian IT Professionals working from home

H_2: There is a significant difference between the stress levels of Male and Female population of Indian IT Professionals working from home

Ho_3: There is no significant difference between the stress levels of young-aged, between the age group of 18-35 years, and old-aged, that is of 50 and above years of age, Indian IT Professionals working from home

H_3: There is a significant difference between the stress levels of young-aged, between the age group of 18-35 years, and old-aged, that is of 50 and above years of age, Indian IT Professionals working from home

5.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY-

5.4.1 Scope of the study: This study will focus on the emerging problem of rising discontentment among IT Professionals Working from Home in Indian context, and their degrading well-being as IT sector is the major contributor in the Indian economy. As this is a major area of concern and in this crisis situation due to Covid-19 pandemic, it is the time demanding need to focus on their productivity.

The study will focus on the overall well-being of Indian IT Professionals which will result in attainment of overall well-being by them, and will also lead to their increased productivity. The study will also focus on the new insights and measures to deal with this problem of reduced productivity. The scope of the study will also be to develop new insights in this field to curb this emerging problem for the smooth functioning, and for maintaining an equilibrium in the Indian Economy. The study will focus of IT sector specifically but it's results and measures can be applied in other sectors as well, which is the beauty of this study.

Relevance of the Study- According to the Parliamentary Committee House Panel Report published in, 'The Sunday Express' New Delhi on November 22, 2020, 'There has been a significant and considerable rise in mental health issues during the lockdown'. The most prominent factors being the, abrupt and sudden loss of employment and social isolation, leveraging the psychological stress and burden among the population. 'The reason being that, the interaction and association with family and friends by staying in touch with them, is an effective stress coping strategy, there is no denial is this fact'. 'The absence of any such coping strategy during the lockdown, made the working-age adults etc. more prone to depression, which gave rise to increased risk of suicide during this pandemic and the committee strongly urged the government to make mental health a priority'. (reader.magzter.com)

So, as it is evident from this report that mental health is being affected during this pandemic, and it's significance, making it a major area of concern, as it is affecting the well-being of the working class by increasing stress levels of the working professionals, affecting their performance, leading to a fall in the economy, the significant and relevance of the study is thereby supported.

5.4.2 Data Collection:

Primary Data : The study proposes to use primary data, collected from the Indian IT Professionals working from home, of selected IT Companies through Online Structured Interview and Online Survey.

5.4.3 Research Design

The study is expected to be Analytical and Empirical in nature.

5.4.4 Population

The Population will be the Indian IT Professionals working from home of selected IT Companies.

5.4.5 Sector

IT Sector- Computer Software And ITES.

5.4.6 Sampling Technique

The present study expects to use both, Judgemental and Snowball Sampling Technique. Judgemental technique will be used, as careful judgement of samples to match the prerequisites, need and purpose of the study is very crucial. From a Judgemental perspective, only working from home professionals from India, belonging to the IT sector will be approached to provide responses for the sample of the study. Secondly, from a Snowball technique perspective, the help of the samples drawn from Judgemental Sampling will be solicited in generating the references and forwarding the surveys to the acquaintances (or known people), as it is a vast sector to cater, to draw the appropriate samples for the study to draw valid conclusions.

5.4.7 Sample Size And Selection Criteria

Sample size will be calculated by applying Cochran's formula as the population is infinite.

$N_0 = Z^2pq/e^2$

Where:

e is the desired level of precision (margin of error),

p is the (estimated) proportion of the population which has the attribute in question,

q is 1-p.

The z-value is derived from the Z table.

p that is the proportion of the population which has the attribute in the study, that is Indian IT professionals working from home is 0.85 (that is 85% of the IT workforce in India), at 95% confidence level, and at least 5% (+/-) precision (0.05). At 95% confidence level the z-value obtained from the Z table is 1.96, q=0.15 (1-0.85)

$n_0 = Z^2pq/e^2$

$= ((1.96)^2*0.85*0.15)/ (0.05)^2$

= 196

So, the sample size for the study will be **196**

5.4.8 Tools of Data Analysis: The following table depicts the specific objective-wise Research Methodology:

Table No. 2; Tools of Data Analysis

S.No.	Objectives of the Study	Proposed Tools
1.	To identify the challenges faced and stressors experienced by Indian IT Professionals working from home	Data Collection- Primary Data: Collected through Online Structured Interviews and Online Survey of 30 respondents (for pilot study) to identify descriptors of challenges and Inter-rater agreement to be done by 3 experts.
2.	To check the association between challenges faced in work from home scenario and perceived stress level of Indian IT Professionals working from home	Appropriate tools will be used to analyse like chi-square analysis etc.
3.	To check the association between stress and well-being of Indian IT Professionals working from home	Appropriate tools like correlation and regression analysis may be used after checking data description
4.	To check the difference in stress levels between Male and Female population of Indian IT Professionals working from home	Appropriate tools will be used and comparative analysis will be done
5.	To check the difference in stress levels of young-aged, between the age group of 18-35 years, and old-aged, that is of 50 and above years of age, Indian IT Professionals working from home	Appropriate tools will be used and comparative analysis will be done

Proposed Tools-

Online Structured Interview- It is the technique which uses online platform for communication. The specific and pre-planned enquiry of the respondents through structured questionnaire and recording their responses in known as Online Structured Interview.

Online Survey- It is the technique is which the respondents are asked to fill a structured questionnaire over the internet to generate the responses.

Intruments that will be used-

WBWS (Well-Being at Work Scale) by Paschoal & Tamayo (2008) will be used to measure the well-being through factor analysis.

PSS (Perceived Stress Scale) will be used to measure the stress of the sample selected.

5.4.9 Phases of Proposed Study

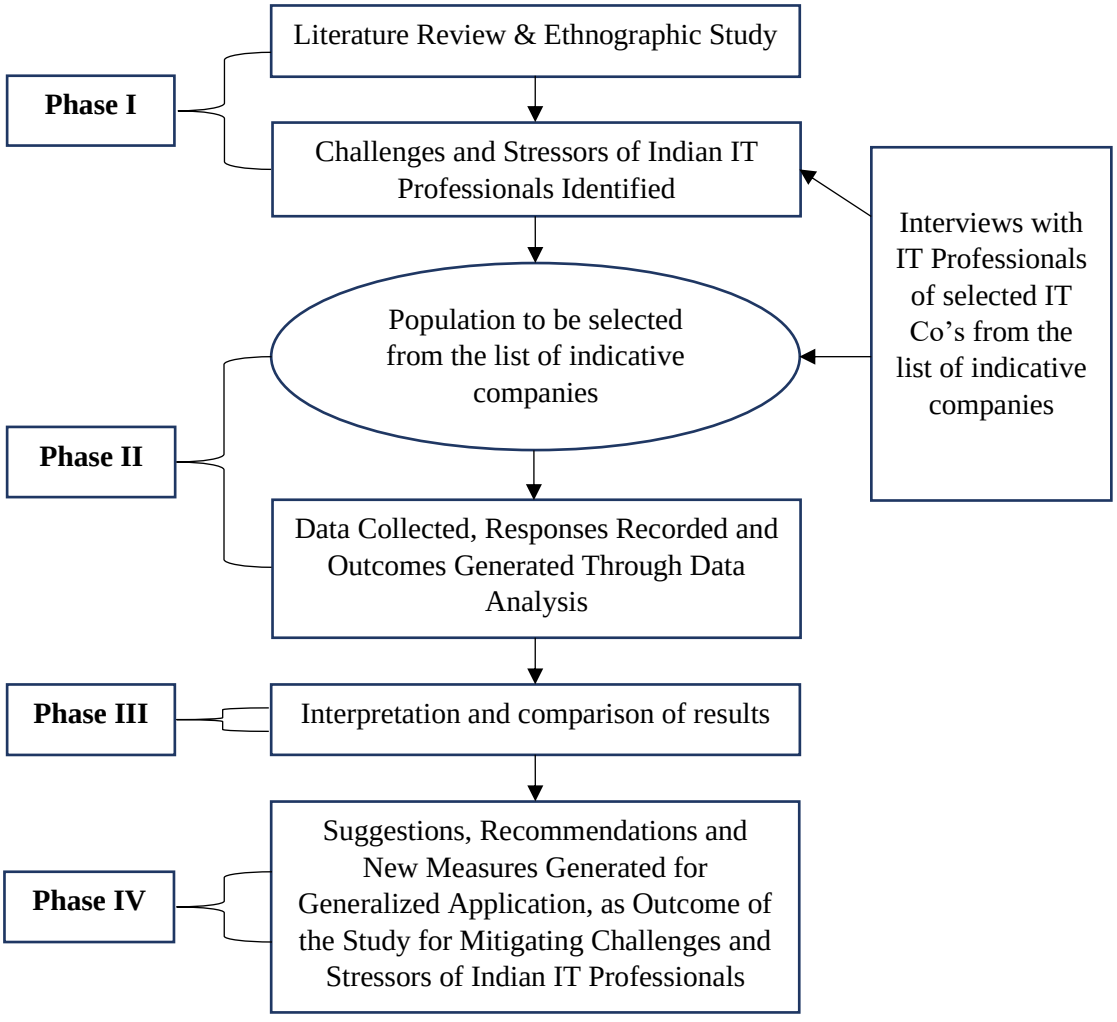
Literature Review & Ethnographic Study
Phase I
Challenges and Stressors of Indian IT Professionals Identified
Interviews with IT Professionals of selected IT Co's from the list of indicative companies
Population to be selected from the list of indicative companies
Phase II
Data Collected, Responses Recorded and Outcomes Generated Through Data Analysis
Phase III
Interpretation and comparison of results
Suggestions, Recommendations and New Measures Generated for Generalized Application, as Outcome of the Study for Mitigating Challenges and Stressors of Indian IT Professionals
Phase IV

Figure 3. Different phases of research study (Resource: Researcher's View)

Phase I- In Phase I, The numerous challenges & stressors of IT Professionals will be identified through Literature Review, Ethnographic study and online interviews conducted of IT Professionals from selected IT Co's from India.

Phase II- In Phase II, Data is collected, Responses will be recorded and outcomes are generated through data analysis. Data collection will be done through online interview mode of IT Professionals of selected IT Co's from India from the list of Indicative companies based on 2 dimensions of selection criteria, that are- **Net Worth** and **Number of Employees.**

Phase III- In Phase III Interpretation of data analysis will be done and results will be compared for generalized application.

Phase IV- In Phase IV, Suggestions & Recommendations will be given based on Interpretation and comparison of results. New measures & insights will be developed to mitigate the emerging problem of discontentment of Indian IT Professionals by mitigating their stress and enhancing their overall well-being. The signifance of overall well-being of Indian IT Professionals will also be analysed and measures in this concern will also be recommended as an outcome of the proposed study for generalized applicable. The outcomes can be applied in other sectors apart from IT sector which enhances the beauty of the proposed study.

Table No. 3; List of Indicative Companies

		Annual Finance Standalone	**Annual Finance Standalone**
		Rs. Million	**Nos.**
		Mar-17	**Mar-17**
Company Name	**Industry Group**	**Net Worth**	**Number of Employees**
Tata Consultancy Services Ltd.	Computer software	774840	387223
Wipro Ltd.	Computer software	459611	137688
Tech Mahindra Ltd.	Computer software	168921	85839
HCL Technologies Ltd.	Computer software	256270	81706
Firstsource Solutions Ltd.	ITES	19867.7	16334
Cyient Ltd.	Computer software	18822	11006
Hexaware Technologies Ltd.	Computer software	13228.5	8624
Persistent Systems Ltd.	Computer software	18144.1	7790
Polaris Consulting & Services Ltd.	Computer software	7598.1	6989
Zensar Technologies Ltd.	Computer software	11281.8	6451
Tata Elxsi Ltd.	Computer software	5589.9	5205
Intellect Design Arena Ltd.	Computer software	5246.3	3834
Sonata Software Ltd.	Computer software	4561.7	3004
Allsec Technologies Ltd.	ITES	1480.4	2460
NIIT Ltd.	Computer software	8086.5	2342
Infinite Computer Solutions (India) Ltd.	Computer software	5529.1	2069

Sasken Technologies Ltd.	Computer software	5416.8	1963
3I Infotech Ltd.	Computer software	1012.4	1927
Nucleus Software Exports Ltd.	Computer software	4721.6	1665
R Systems International Ltd.	Computer software	2203.4	1665
Cigniti Technologies Ltd.	Computer software	1297.1	1626
Mastek Ltd.	Computer software	2316.5	1577

SECTION 6: PROPOSED CHAPTERIZATION-

- The proposed research will contain the following chapters:
- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Review of Literature
- Chapter 3: Research Methodology
- Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis
- Chapter 5: Conclusions
- Bibliography
- Annexures

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